MYSTICAL EXPERIENCE IN H.D. AND WALT WHITMAN: AN INTERTEXTUAL READING OF *TRIBUTE TO THE ANGELS* AND "SONG OF MYSELF"

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IN THE LAST TWENTY YEARS, the critical attention focused on the poet H.D. has shifted from her shorter, widely anthologized Imagist pieces to her more weighty later works, such as *Trilogy* and *Helen in Egypt.* As the middle section of *Trilogy, Tribute to the Angels* (1945) arose out of H.D.'s experience of the London blitz and its aftermath, and as such was considered by the contemporary audience to be the latest example of the English body of twentieth-century war poetry exemplified by Wilfred Owen and Sigfried Sassoon. However, as Stanley Kunitz has written, "The war was the occasion, it is not the subject matter of the poem."[1] In recent years, many critics have read the work as concerned not simply with the poet's reaction to the Second World War, but also as involved with her larger interest in feminism. Beginning with Susan Gubar's "The Echoing Spell of H.D.'s *Trilogy*" (1978) and continuing into the 1990s, feminist interpretations have established *Tribute to the Angels* as H.D.'s attempt to recenter patriarchal religious and mythological systems—particularly as found in St. John's Revelations—on the Goddess, to establish a new feminist psychic and cultural tradition.[2] The poem is also often read as autobiography, as critics have considered H.D.'s effort to free her poetry from male culture as analogous to her desire to free her life from the many strong men upon whom she was dependent personally, artistically, and spiritually; to use the well-known term of Rachel Blau DuPlessis, in her later works H.D. attempted to liberate herself from "romantic thralldom."[3] One of the main questions of *Trilogy*, according to Deborah Kelly Kloepfer, is "How is it . . . that H.D. managed finally to create a Mother amidst so many jealous, appropriating, demanding 'fathers' to whom she was so tightly bound for the better part of seventy-six years?"[4] In recent criticism, a long list of these domineering personalities has been proposed, "fathers" who influenced both the art and life of H.D.; among these belong Ezra Pound, Richard Aldington, D.H. Lawrence, William Carlos Williams, T.S. Eliot, and Sigmund Freud.[5]

However, these readings overlook one crucial figure standing behind all the others: Walt Whitman. A close reading reveals that H.D.'s

Tribute to the Angels, her manifesto of feminist emancipation, supplants the restrictive grip of her mentors by drawing from and transforming another liberating text, "Song of Myself." Reading H.D. alongside of Whitman reinforces the value of mysticism in both works, for it is through the mystical experience that both poets come to free the self. Both recent H.D. and Whitman studies, however, have de-emphasized the mystical aspect of their work. In "Signaling: Feminism, Politics, and Mysticism in H.D.'s War Trilogy," Adelaide Morris demonstrates that recent post-structuralist interpretations of *Tribute* "tend to mute the positive claims of H.D.'s mysticism either by sliding quickly past them or by construing them as discursive ploys" in the service of a feminist sexual politics.[6] Similarly, much Whitman criticism of the last few years, such as Betsy Erkkila's *Whitman the Political Poet* (1989),[7] M. Jimmie Killingsworth's *Whitman's Poetry of the Body* (1990),[8] and Ezra Greenspan's *Walt Whitman and the American Reader* (1990),[9] has focused on the political and cultural conditions of the poet's work. Except for George Hutchinson's interpretation of Whitman as shaman in *The Ecstatic Whitman* (1986) and David Kuebrich's *Minor Prophecy* (1989), which views Whitman as the founder of a "new American religion," the importance of Whitman as a spiritual guide has been suppressed in recent studies.[10] In an intertextual reading of *Tribute to the Angels* and "Song of Myself," Whitman's mysticism again resumes its importance as we see how H.D. draws from and redefines his poem.[11]

In order to see clearly the similarities in the H.D. and Whitman mystical experiences, I find useful James E. Miller's essay " 'Song of Myself' as Inverted Mystical Experience."[12] Although it has been attacked as well as praised since its 1957 publication, Miller's essay remains the best known of the at least twenty major partitive outlines established by critics in the last hundred years.[13] Miller reads "Song of Myself" by overlaying Evelyn Underhill's phases of the mystical encounter as she analyzes and records those phases in her famous study *Mysticism* (1911).[14] In many ways, Miller's structural principle reinforces claims about Whitman's mysticism that had circulated since R.M. Bucke's *Cosmic Consciousness* (1901)[15] and William James's *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (1902).[16]

Similar to Whitman, the modern poet H.D. was known not only for her poetry, but also for her lifelong interest in the varieties of religious experience. H.D. was baptized as a Moravian and developed a profound interest in mysticism as well as the occult—in astrology, numerology, and tarot reading.[17] She describes several visionary experiences, such as the noted "jelly-fish" and "writing on the wall" episodes, in her writings, and she also attended séances during the Second World War where she believed she received messages from dead RAF

pilots. In addition to these somewhat curious aspects of her religious life, H.D. was a dedicated scholar of the hermetic tradition and the Kabbalah.

Although there is no documentation of H.D.'s reading the Good Gray Poet, Dianne Chisholm believes that American transcendentalism colors H.D.'s work,[18] and Gay Wilson Allen has established the enormous—and conscious—influence of *Leaves of Grass* on many of H.D.'s closest associates. Two modern poets whose debt to Whitman has been acknowledged both by themselves and by critics were Pound, H.D.'s early mentor and fiancé, and Lawrence, one of H.D.'s most intimate friends and preceptors. Similarly, the psychologist Havelock Ellis, a perceptive early reader of Whitman, especially of the homoerotic aspects of his poetry, was a companion of H.D. in the 1920s.[19] As part of the expatriate "Lost Generation" between the wars, H.D. also associated with Sylvia Beach, who created an influential Whitman exhibition in her Paris bookstore, Shakespeare and Company, in 1926. As a final example, Edith Sitwell, who was also a member of H.D.'s London circle in the 1930s, is credited by Allen as someone "who aided in sustaining Whitman's reputation in Great Britain during the first half of the twentieth century" (Allen, 279); incidentally, H.D. dedicated *Tribute to the Angels* to Sitwell's brother Osbert, who wrote a sympathetic review of the first section of the trilogy and arranged for publication of *Tribute*.[20]

We can easily assume H.D. knew Whitman's work through this biographical conjecture. But more importantly, we can determine, in the light of Miller's essay, how H.D.'s mystic journey in *Tribute* is remarkably similar to Whitman's in "Song of Myself," involving many of the same progressive phases of enlightenment, although sometimes occurring in a different order, as one finds in Whitman. For example, according to Miller's schema, Whitman's poem begins with an "entry into the mystical state" (7). In a passive, receptive mood in sections 1-5, the speaker of "Song of Myself" (whom I will call "Whitman" for simplicity's sake, just as I will call *Tribute*'s speaker "H.D.") hopes to "permit to speak at every hazard, / Nature without check with original energy."[21] An intense experience of nature allows Whitman to advance toward the tumultuous merging of spirit and body that launches him into the unknown in section 5: "Swiftly arose and spread around me the peace and knowledge that pass all the argument of the earth" (33).

Whitman's profound realization of the power of nature in the first few sections is the result of an encounter with a humble natural object: "I lean and loafe at my ease observing a spear of summer grass" (28). In the same way, H.D.'s first steps towards mystical enlightenment in *Tribute to the Angels*—recorded by H.D. in other writings as an actual event—begin with the experience of a seemingly insignificant thing of

nature: "The unexpected epiphany which generated this spring poem occurred on a London bus when H.D. glimpsed a charred apple-tree flowering again amidst the rubble of a burned out square" (Gelpi, "Re-Membering the Mother," 182). In *Tribute to the Angels*, H.D. poetically describes the encounter in this way:

[W]e crossed the charred portico,
passed through a frame—doorless—

entered a shrine; like a ghost,
we entered a house through a wall;

then still not knowing
whether (like the wall)

we were there or not there,
we saw the tree flowering;

it was an ordinary tree
in an old garden square.[22]

In spite of H.D.'s claim that "it was an ordinary tree / in an old garden square," the apple tree comes to bear metaphoric meaning in the poem, just as Whitman's grass has been discovered by critics to be a rich symbol. H.D.'s tree, associated with the rod of Caduceus, Aaron's rod, and, of course, the flowering rood of Christian lore, becomes in *Tribute* a figure for rebirth reinforcing the images of the New Jerusalem H.D. establishes earlier in the poem (Gubar, 208).

Another of Miller's and Underhill's mystical phases shared by Whitman and H.D. is that of the "purification of the self." In "Song of Myself," Whitman undergoes a purification, largely based on a celebration of the physical life, which Miller sees as an inversion of a typical mystical experience:

As it has been through acceptance of the body, not through mortification of it as something evil, that the mystical experience has been launched in "Song of Myself," it should not be surprising that in the "purification" phase the traditional values of the mystic are inverted. Purification is achieved, not through "purgation," not through "discipline and mortification," but by an ennobling and an accepting of what has been mistakenly reviled and degraded. (15-16)

Whitman believes that one must explore, experience, and indulge the body in order to reach higher planes of consciousness, and declares,

I am the poet of the Body and I am the poet of the Soul,
The pleasures of heaven are with me and the pains of hell are with me,
The first I graft and increase upon myself, the latter I translate into a new tongue. (48)

Miller explains these lines in this way: "As the poet will, through self, 'increase' the 'pleasures of heaven' (the spiritual), so he will 'translate into a new tongue'—transfigure, purify, the 'pains of hell' (the physical)" (17). Whitman will, then, transform our views of physical, especially sexual, experience until we see it as a worthy part of the all; what we have called "wickedness" we will call "goodness" as through Whitman "voices of sexes and lusts" are "clarified and transfigur'd" (53).

Two of the most remarkable moments in *Tribute to the Angels* also involve clarifying and transfiguring. H.D. calls upon Hermes Trismegistus to be her muse and proceeds to use the figure of the alchemist's crucible to express how she will transform the negative into the positive. She brings about these metamorphoses through the power of language, using word play, or "associational semantics" as Kunitz calls this process (208), accomplishing the "conversion of bitter experience into hope through the 'flame' of Vision" (Revell, 191). For example, in section 8 of the poem, H.D. turns the Hebrew word for bitter, *marah*, into Mother:

Now polish the crucible
and in the bowl distill

a word most bitter, *marah*,
a word bitterer still, *mar*,

sea, brine, breaker, seducer,
giver of life, giver of tears;

now polish the crucible
and set the jet of flame

under, till *marah-mar*
are melted, fuse and join

and change and alter,
mer, mere, mere, mater, Maia, Mary,

Star of the Sea,
Mother. (552)

In spite of the propitious transformation from *marah* to Mother, in section 9 H.D. declares that a "bitter jewel" remains "in the heart of the bowl" of the crucible (552). The poet has more work of purification to undertake because of "an unsatisfied duality" she senses in herself and in all women (553). Therefore a second effort of semantic alchemy is necessary, and this second transfiguration is especially Whitmanesque because it concerns re-presenting despised sexuality as holiness and beauty, a major point of similarity between the two poems. H.D.

believed that female sexuality had been degraded, symbolized by the unjust modern association of Venus and "dirty" carnality.[23] An "impious wrong" (553) had been done to Venus by linking her to venery, and H.D. struggles to transform her into the more respected Aphrodite through the alchemy of language:

O swiftly, re-light the flame
before the substance cool,

for suddenly we saw your name
desecrated; knaves and fools

have done you impious wrong,
Venus, for venery stands for impurity

and Venus as desire
is venereous, lascivious. . . .

Swiftly relight the flame,
Aphrodite, holy name,

Astarte, hull and spar
of wrecked ships lost your star,

forgot the light at dusk,
forgot the prayer at dawn;

return, O holiest one,
Venus, whose name is kin

to venerate,
venerator. (553-554)

Janice S. Robinson suggests that in these Venus sections H.D. is attempting to come to a personal acceptance of a life the world would regard as full of "illicit passion" (325); on a more public level, by transfiguring Venus into venerator the poet is trying to break down the dualities of body and soul for all women, just as Whitman urges the reader to approve the "voices of sexes and lusts" he "translate[s] into a new tongue." H.D. here demonstrates one of Bucke's "symptoms" of cosmic consciousness, the conquest of the sense of sin, for the illumined person "no longer sees that there is any sin in the world from which to escape" (74).

Mystic enlightenment, though, entails resolving other dichotomies as well as that of body and spirit. This transformation of all dualities into unity is what Bucke means when he writes that the person of

cosmic consciousness understands that "the universe is so built and ordered that without any peradventure all things work together for the good of each and all": "Especially does he obtain such a conception of THE WHOLE, or at least of an immense WHOLE, as dwarfs all conception, imagination or speculation . . ." (74). Jacob Behman, for instance, one of the historical figures Bucke claims found cosmic consciousness, "saw the root of all mysteries . . . whence issue all contrasts and discordant principles, hardness and softness, severity and mildness, sweet and bitter, love and sorrow, heaven and hell" (74). Similarly, Miller states that for Whitman, "purification of the self" is not only a matter of accepting the body as well as the spirit, but also of upholding any part of the world usually considered the lesser half of a hierarchical dichotomy. In the purification sections (17-32), then, Whitman reconciles "opposites usually considered irreconcilable," enfolding the vanquished and the victor, others and the self, woman and man, science and spirit, and animal and man (Miller, 16). In their personal lives and in their poetry, both Whitman and H.D. manifested this desire to resolve contraries by upholding bisexuality instead of the "unsatisfied duality" of heterosexuality or homosexuality.

In *Tribute to the Angels*, H.D. works to resolve an additional dichotomy that Whitman ignores in the purification sections of "Song of Myself": war and peace. At the beginning of *Tribute*, H.D. remembers the horror of the air war from which her poem was born:

Never in Rome,
so many martyrs fell;

not in Jerusalem,
never in Thebes,

so many stood and watched
chariot-wheels turning,

saw with their very eyes,
the battle of the Titans,

saw Zeus' thunderbolts in action. . . . (550)

H.D. was profoundly traumatized by the First World War, which alienated her from her husband, Richard Aldington, who left her to serve in Europe, and also robbed her of her brother, Gilbert, who was killed in France. However, H.D. saw her role in World War II as that of a spiritual wound-dresser, as Whitman had been literally during the Civil War: She remained in London during the blitz in order to partake of the terrifying experience with the people of the city and to help the citizens in any way she could, especially, she believed, through

the healing and strengthening power of her poetry.

Although *Tribute to the Angels* is much more than a war poem, it is in part about the poet's coming to accept war as a worthy part of the all. H.D. designs her poem, as the title states, to be a tribute to the angels, the "planetary spirits" she envisions as having watched over London during the bombing (Quinn, 121). One of the angels, Uriel, is the angel of war, and H.D.'s embracing of this figure in *Tribute* signals her accepting that war, as well as peace, is a valuable force in the cosmos. Vincent Quinn writes:

> This recognition leads her to the conclusion that war is part of the divine plan for the universe. She then begins to understand that war is an expression of the qualities of strength and courage that support mankind in crises; from this viewpoint, Uriel deserves as much respect as the other angels. (121)

H.D. is able to accept war because she sees it as "an expression of the qualities of strength and courage that support mankind in crises"; in other words, the war experience did bring some measure of positive growth to the citizens of London and to her personally. "Looking back," Quinn writes, "she came to believe that the five years' ordeal had cleansed and strengthened her soul" (112). In addition, war is a useful force because it makes peace seem all the sweeter, just as the violence of winter helps emphasize the beauties of spring. In this section of the poem H.D. links Uriel with Anneal, the angel of the peace of God (Robinson, 320):

> So we hail them together,
> one to contrast the other,
>
> two of the seven Spirits,
> set before God
>
> as lamps on the high-altar,
> for one must inexorably
>
> take fire from the other
> as spring from winter,
>
> and surely never, never
> was a spring more bountiful
>
> than this; never, never
> was a season more beautiful. . . . (557)

As the war is drawing to a close, H.D. can welcome Uriel as part of the reawakening world. In section 15 she uses the metaphor of the harmonious Venetian campanili to express that just as the voices of

different bells can sound together in concord, Uriel's voice can blend beautifully with those of the other angels (Quinn, 122). The wondrous vision of the charred but living tree, the "flowering rood," was in part possible through the agency of the war angel, to whom the poet pauses "to give / thanks that we rise again from death and live" (561).

Whitman, who seems willing to include and enfold all—even to the "beetles rolling balls of dung" (52) in section 24—and to reject nothing since his "gait is no fault-finder's or rejecter's gait" (50), is not as willing as H.D. is to accept the angel of war. Whitman only considers war in the frightening "dark night of the soul" sections (33-37), the phase of his mystic journey where, according to Miller, the poet is only conscious of his "identity with the sinful, the suffering, the downtrodden, the injured, the sick, the wounded" (23), such as the martyr burned at the stake, the slave hounded by captors, the fireman crushed during his work. In these sections of "Song of Myself," Whitman describes the shocking brutalities of war time, such as those suffered by the "old artillerist" (67) and the combatants at Goliad and on the *Bonhomme Richard*, without ever finding anything redemptive associated with the fighting, such as human strength and courage, or the opportunity for renewal, as H.D. does. Miller writes, "Although the land battle and the sea battle exhibit man courageous in the face of defeat and victory, such courage becomes meaningless in the face of the resulting misery and suffering and death, in the face of the 'irretrievable' " (24).

After the dark night of the soul, Whitman, according to Miller, advances to one of the most exhilarating moments of "Song of Myself," the union with the divine; indeed, "in union the poet's merging with the Transcendent is symbolized by outright identification of self with Christ" (25). The poet comes forth in section 39 as the remarkable Christ-savage figure, a kind of new Messiah who seems to be partly Jesus of the New Testament and partly Walt Whitman, a "rough" of nineteenth-century America. Using the "I" he has employed throughout the poem, Whitman as the Christ-savage sets about describing how he will heal the nation physically and spiritually.

In the midst of his mystical experience, Whitman remakes the central male personage of the Christian religion in his own image. An astoundingly similar occurrence dominates *Tribute*, for in section 28 of that poem, H.D. is meditating again on the angels when the "Lady herself" comes instead (564). This sudden vision of a Virgin Mary-like goddess comes at a high point of the mystical experience and signifies a direct encounter with the divine, just as does the abrupt appearance of the Christ-savage. As Whitman transforms Christ, H.D. also remakes Mary to her liking, for the Lady, as many critics have noted, owes a great deal to the non-Christian traditions H.D. admired. Critics have found, for example, that the Lady seems to be not purely Mary, but also

conflated with the Venus-Aphrodite figure mentioned earlier in the poem, the Greek mythological princess Psyche, the Roman goddess Bona Dea, and the Egyptian goddess Astarte, among others.

Additionally, the poet of *Tribute to the Angels* has remade the dominant female personage of Christianity by subtracting from her image her most recognizable attribute, as "the Child was not with her" (567)—perhaps because H.D. envisions an ideal Mary who will not be beholden to the male Christ for her renown and power. Also similar to Whitman's Christ-savage, H.D.'s Lady is in many ways a vision of self, the new self which has arisen during the mystical adventure. Janice S. Robinson, Susan Friedman, and Albert Gelpi all find that H.D. looks on "an apotheosis of the Self" when she envisions the Lady (Gelpi, "Re-Membering the Mother," 185). The writer H.D. seems especially to identify with the goddess in the attribute she adds to the Mary figure: "she carries a book but it is not / the tome of the ancient wisdom, / the pages I imagine, are the blank pages / of the unwritten volume of the new . . ." (570). Some critics have speculated that this tome of new feminine wisdom contains the poetry of H.D., perhaps even *Tribute to the Angels*.

In two other ways, H.D.'s mystical experience in *Tribute to the Angels* parallels Whitman's "Song of Myself" account. First, as Bucke foresees the mystically enlightened future, in "contact with the flux of cosmic consciousness all religions known and named to-day will be melted down" (5). In his poem the cosmically illumined Whitman tries to integrate all religions to form the creed of the Christ-savage. Miller states,

> The poet has heard "what was said of the universe" but finds these theories—these religions—insufficient, incomplete. He does not reject them. He takes them all—Jehovah, Kronos, Zeus, Brahma, Buddha, and the rest—"for what they are worth" but fills out the "rough, deific sketches" in himself, in the "framer framing a house," in the "mechanic's wife with her babe," in common people and in the commonplace. (26-27)

In section 43, Whitman again declares that the faith of the Christ-savage enfolds all of the religions in history, from primitive peoples who made a fetish of rocks and stumps to the American frontier circuit riders of the 1800s. In the same way, H.D. begins *Tribute to the Angels* by urging Hermes Trismegistus to inspire orators and poets to "melt down and integrate" (547) all the religions of the world, just as Christianity transformed and used—and unfortunately rejected—elements of earlier pagan beliefs. H.D.'s words echo and amplify Whitman's famous passages about the mystical unity of all religions:

> [T]ake what the old-church
> found in Mithra's tomb,

candle and script and bell,
take what the new-church spat upon

and broke and shattered;
collect the fragments of the splintered glass

and of your fire and breath
melt down and integrate,

re-invoke, re-create. . . . (547-548)

Finally, Miller describes Whitman's "emergence from the mystical state" (32) as a phase in which the poet is exhausted—"Wrench'd and sweaty—calm and cool then my body becomes, / I sleep—I sleep long" (88)—and has lost his ability to describe eloquently his experience, a typical occurrence for mystics leaving the state of higher consciousness. At the end of "Song of Myself," Whitman can only stammer ineffectually when trying to relate the "it" of his cosmic encounter to others:

I do not know it—it is without name—it is a word unsaid,
It is not in any dictionary, utterance, symbol.

Something it swings on more than the earth I swing on,
To it the creation is the friend whose embracing awakes me. (88)

In some cryptic lines of *Tribute to the Angels*, H.D. seems to encounter the same difficulty of expressing the color of the jewel left in the bowl of her crucible, which perhaps serves as a symbol of the essence of the mystical experience:

I do not know what it gives,
a vibration that we can not name

for there is no name for it;
my patron said, "name it";

I said, I can not name it,
there is no name;

he said,
"invent it." (555)

The Whitman text furnishes us with a new way to read the undefined "it" in those lines; indeed, an intertextual reading of "Song of Myself," as interpreted by Miller, and *Tribute to the Angels* reinvigorates both works and clarifies and transfigures our understanding of the place of both poets in literary history. When read against "Song of Myself,"

H.D.'s poem expands beyond the limits of its World War II origin and recent feminist and post-structuralist readings and into its full significance as a work of mysticism; when read in light of *Tribute to the Angels*, Whitman's poem, which recent critical studies have tied closely to its roots in nineteenth-century political and cultural life, regains its importance as a pronouncement of a transcendent spirituality. Additionally, the marked similarities between these two works reaffirm H.D.'s sometimes tenuous place in the canon by connecting her work to Whitman and the mainstream of American poetry. In her effort to throw off the restrictive "fathers" of modernism, H.D. found inspiration in one of the grand patriarchs of the American tradition, whose "Song of Myself" can be seen as a model for twentieth-century women's spirituality so firmly associated with H.D.

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NOTES

1 Stanley Kunitz, "H.D.'s War Trilogy," *A Kind of Order, A Kind of Folly: Essays and Conversations* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1975), 204.

2 Susan Gubar, "The Echoing Spell of H.D.'s *Trilogy*," *Contemporary Literature* 19.2 (1978): 196-218. Similar interpretations that followed in the wake of Gubar's article include Joyce Lorraine Beck, "Dea Awakening: A Reading of H.D.'s *Trilogy*," *San Jose Studies* 8 (1982), 59-70; Susan Standford Friedman, "Psyche Reborn: Tradition, Revision and the Goddess as Mother-Symbol in H.D.'s Epic Poetry," *Women's Studies* 6 (1979), 147-160; Albert Gelpi, "Re-Membering the Mother: A Reading of H.D.'s *Trilogy*," *H.D.: Woman and Poet*, Michael King, ed. (Orono, ME: National Poetry Foundation, 1986), 173-190; Albert Gelpi, "Two Ways of Spelling It Out: An Archetypal-Feminist Reading of H.D.'s *Trilogy* and Adrienne Rich's *Sources*," *The Southern Review* 26 (1990), 266-284; Donna Krolik Hollenberg, *H.D.: The Poetics of Childbirth and Creativity* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1991), 97-139; Andrew Howdle, "Feminine Hermeticism in H.D.'s 'Trilogy,' " *Studies in Mystical Literature* 4 (1984), 26-44; Dawn Kolokithas, "The Pursuit of Spirituality in the Poetry of H.D.," *San Jose Studies* 13 (1987), 66-76; and Alicia Ostriker, "The Poet as Heroine: Learning to Read H.D.," *American Poetry Review* 12 (1983), 29-38.

3 Rachel Blau DuPlessis, "Romantic Thralldom in H.D.," *Signets: Reading H.D.*, ed. Susan Standford Friedman and Rachel Blau DuPlessis (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990), 406-429.

4 Deborah Kelly Kloepfer, *The Unspeakable Mother: Forbidden Discourse in Jean Rhys and H.D.* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989), 117.

5 See, for example, Cyrena Pondrum, "*Trilogy* and *Four Quartets*: Contrapuntal Versions of Spiritual Quest," *Agenda* 25 (1987-1988), 155-165; Peter Revell, "The Meanings that Words Hide: H.D.'s *Trilogy*," *Quest in Modern American Poetry* (London: Vision Press, 1981), 171-198; Paul Smith, *Pound Revised* (London: Croom Helm, 1983), 110-132; Walter Sutton, "Trilogy and the Pisan Cantos: The Shock of War," *Sagetrieb* 6 (1987), 41-52; and Melody M. Zajdel, " 'I See Her Differently': H.D.'s *Trilogy* as Feminist Response to Masculine Modernism," *Sagetrieb* 5 (1986), 7-16.

6 Adelaide Morris, "Signaling: Feminism, Politics, and Mysticism in H.D.'s War Trilogy," *Sagetrieb* 9 (1990), 131.

7 Betsy Erkkila, *Whitman the Political Poet* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989).

8 M. Jimmie Killingsworth, *Whitman's Poetry of the Body: Sexuality, Politics, and the Text* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989).

9 Ezra Greenspan, *Walt Whitman and the American Reader* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

10 George B. Hutchinson, *The Ecstatic Whitman: Literary Shamanism and the Crisis of the Union* (Columbus: Ohio State UP, 1986); David Kuebrich, *Minor Prophecy: Walt Whitman's New American Religion* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989).

11 I am using the word *intertextuality* as it is defined in Jay Clayton and Eric Rothstein, eds., *Influence and Intertextuality in Literary History* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991); that is, I find that a network of intersecting ideas exists between the two texts.

12 All quotations from Miller are from James E. Miller, Jr., " 'Song of Myself' as Inverted Mystical Experience," *A Critical Guide to* Leaves of Grass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), 6-35.

13 Edwin Haviland Miller, *Walt Whitman's "Song of Myself": A Mosaic of Interpretations* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1989), traces the history of critical works on "Song of Myself" that focus on defining a structure for the poem.

14 Evelyn Underhill, *Mysticism: A Study in the Nature and Development of Man's Spiritual Consciousness* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1911).

15 Richard Maurice Bucke, *Cosmic Consciousness: A Study in the Evolution of the Human Mind* (Philadelphia: Innes and Sons, 1901).

16 William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in the Evolution of the Human Mind* (New York: Longmans, Green, 1902).

17 Barbara Guest, *Herself Defined: The Poet H.D. and Her World* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1984), 9.

18 Diane Chisholm, *H.D.'s Freudian Poetics: Psychoanalysis in Translation* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992). In the section "Mixing Hieroglyphics: American Transcendentalism and Freudian Oneirocriticism" of *H.D.'s Freudian Poetics* (36-50), Chisholm does discover some evidence of American transcendentalism in H.D.'s reading of Freud, but for the most part discounts the effect of that school of thought and its writers on the modern woman poet: "But it is not from singing the 'Song of Myself' with an all-American troupe of troubadours, the phallic poets ('spermatic' men) whom Emerson awaited, but from analysis with Freud that she found her self-confidence" (48). Besides Chisholm's brief comments, I have found only one other significant instance of Whitman and H.D. discussed together in the critical literature. Albert Gelpi characterizes a climactic moment in H.D.'s *The Flowering of the Rod* in this way: "In our patriarchal society this is perhaps the closest a woman poet has come to claiming the prophetic representativeness of *Leaves of Grass*" (188) ("Re-Membering the Mother: A Reading of H.D.'s *Trilogy*").

19 Gay Wilson Allen, *The New Walt Whitman Handbook* (New York: New York University Press, 1975), 277.

20 Janice S. Robinson, *H.D.: The Life and Work of an American Poet* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1982), 316.

21 Whitman, 29. All quotations from Whitman's "Song of Myself" are from *Leaves of Grass: Comprehensive Reader's Edition*, ed. Harold Blodgett and Sculley Bradley (New York: New York University Press, 1965), 28-89.

22 H.D., 559. All quotations from H.D.'s *Tribute to the Angels* are from *Collected Poems: 1912-1944*, ed. Louis L. Martz (New York: New Directions, 1983), 545-574.

23 Vincent Quinn, *Hilda Doolittle (H.D.)* (New York: Twayne, 1967), 122.